



# Gurteen Gazette

## March 2024



*The farm is abuzz with new life, like this lovely dairy calf!*



*Students busy practicing their ATV skills before they headed out on placement.*



*A wonderful turn out at this year's graduation ceremony, celebrating our students from 2023.*

**Want more frequent updates? Follow us on all our social media pages!**



### Principals Welcome

When I close my eyes and listen - really listen- the sounds on campus often give an indication of the season and mood across our community. Today I can hear:

- Down the corridor some Level 8 Agricultural Science & Sustainability students are talking in hushed tones about the assessment they have just completed.
- In our canteen there is excited but nervous chatter of Vet nurse students- as they anticipate encounters with a 16-hand sports horse or 550 kg dairy cow (it's a little different from the more laboratory focussed studies they are used to at the TUS midlands campus in Athlone)
- Outside my window the Mistle Thrush sings as they bask in some late afternoon sunshine
- In the distance the lowing of the dairy cows as they are gathered from the grazing paddock ready for milking.
- All of these sounds are interrupted by the unmistakable sound of a Volkswagen as a lone student tries to sneak back on campus unseen!

These sounds tell me one thing very clearly; it is springtime. Spring is always an exciting season at Gurteen, the farm is a hive of activity - with calves, lambs, and students occupying our time, we are all blessed to be surrounded by the joy and wonder of new life.

Finally, I want to share with you a couple of my recent conversations with the parents and grandparents of Gurteen students. At our recent graduation ceremony, a family proudly told me that on graduation and receiving the 'green cert' their grandson had been made a partner in the farming business. A few days later a parent commented on our social media regarding his daughter who had just graduated stating "You gave our daughter, who's from a non-farming background, an exceptional educational grounding, which has steered her passion for agriculture into a dream job- which she now has."

-Principal Jon Parry





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### Macra Inter-College's Day

This year's Macra Inter-College's Day took place over at Kildalton College, where the Gurteen Team had a spectacular day. Not only did we enjoy ourselves, but we came away with some fantastic results!

The day involved a number of challenges for our twelve students to compete in including tug-o-war, tractor driving, stock judging, puzzle solving, group presentations, and more!

Overall Gurteen came away with second place out of the six colleges- only narrowly missing out on first place by a few points. Gurteen achieved second place in six of the nine competitions- an incredible feat.

Results:

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in Tug-O-War

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the Simulator Challenge

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the NBI Farm Tech Award

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the FRS sponsored presentation competition

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the FRS Fencing Challenge

2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the Team Challenge

A huge congratulations to all the students who fantastically represented Gurteen at this event- they certainly showed what Gurteen is made of!

This year's Gurteen team was made up of twelve students from across Ireland: Lee McGarry, Éanna McDonnell, Colm Seery, Bill Kelly, Conor Mahon, Adam Carthy, Séan Corrigan, Rowan Byrne, Shane Bracken, Ciarán Heneghan, Abi Turner and Catherine Cooney.



*The Fencing team came second overall, despite very wet and muddy conditions!*



*This trio of students completed the NBI Farm tech award presentation, and achieved second place!*



*This year's team who represented Gurteen at the Inter-College's day at Kildalton College*





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### Celebrating 20 years of Partnership with TUS Athlone Veterinary Nursing

This year marks a spectacular anniversary for our friends over at the TUS Athlone campus as they celebrate 20 years of teaching vet nursing!

It's also a celebration we join in with, as we celebrate our 20-year partnership with them, as their students have been coming to Gurteen every year to complete some of their large animal husbandry modules with us.

This partnership is one we treasure, and as our ties with TUS grow it's one we will continue to celebrate!

Congratulations to the teaching team at Athlone for their massive success with the course- and here's to many more years of successful partnership!



*Some of this year's TUS Athlone Veterinary Nursing students at Gurteen!*



*(Above) Some TUS Athlone Veterinary Nursing students learning about lunging a horse with Paul McGlone*



*(Above) Students listening to a Machinery talk from Mike Cogavin, and Tom Duffy*

*(Below) Students learning about our Sheep and lambing enterprise during the Agri-Aware day.*



### Agri-Aware 2024

We recently welcomed over 300 school students onsite as part of this year's Agri Aware Farm Walk and Talk event!

With schools from across Ireland travelling to Gurteen, and spending the morning with us listening to a variety of talks, such as Machinery Safety, Grass and Silage production, Biodiversity, Dairy Enterprises, Soils, and so many more! We hope all the students and teachers who attended enjoyed the day as much as we did- even with the wet weather!





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### Equine Course Updates

What a quick first semester that was!

Our Level 5 Equitation students have gone out on placement now for 8 weeks and are due back on the 2nd of April 2024. They have gone to various different establishments including Showjumping yards, Stud yards, Riding centres, livery yards, and sales yards.

It will be so exciting to hear of their experiences and what they have learned whilst out on placement. It is so invaluable to the real-life experience that our students will receive from going on placement. They will get to see how a yard is run and what it takes behind the scenes to obtain the goals that you set out to achieve.

The applications for our Level 5 Certificate in Horsemanship/Equitation and the Level 5 Certificate in Stud Management are currently open with applications flying in for both courses due to begin in September 2024. Our Level 6 applications are also now open and we welcome any student who wishes to join our Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Horsemanship/Equitation and Advanced Certificate in Stud Management courses!

The course has been very busy with trips away to the Army Equitation School, to RACE, the Farrier School, and of course the customary trip to TRI Equestrian for a little light retail therapy after a busy day

With this in mind, we are currently in the process of organising further trips for the students upon their return from placement to see different aspects of the industry.

The rest of the academic year is going to be a busy one, with open days, events, and trips away. Of course, as always, we will keep you updated as we go.

**-Naomi Ruane, Equine Course Coordinator**



*Students enjoying some outdoors riding before their placements began.*



*Outside the Army Equitation School for one of their fantastic trips.*



*Showing off their indoor jumping skills!*





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### Graduation 2024

On February 16th we welcomed back our graduates of 2023 to celebrate their academic achievements and bid them a fond fair well and good luck in their future endeavours!

The day was a wonderful time, and as always it was so lovely to catch up with everyone as to what they've gotten up to since leaving Gurteen last summer!

As part of the day, we award a number of students prizes for students of the year- and this year is no different! So, we'd like to offer a special congratulations to David Taylor, Our 2023 Drystock Student of the Year. To Jordon Egan, our 2023 Dairy Student of the Year, and to Stephanie Frizzell, our 2023 Crops and Machinery Student of the Year.

These awards, and their bursaries, are sponsored by some of our closest partners- so thank you to ABP, Arrabawn, and Liffey Mills for their continued support and their contribution in recognising these students' fantastic successes!

Alongside these awards, the IHFA also awards bursaries to students from a nominated group who go through the IHFA's interview process. This year's prizes were awarded to Colin Grennan, and Mark Killian- congratulations to you both!

Graduation is always a bittersweet day too, as now that these graduates embark on their next walks of life- but we hope that they keep in touch, and know we're never far away!



*(Left) Stephanie Frizzell receiving her award for Crops and Machinery Student of the Year 2023*

*(Right) Jordon Egan receiving his award for Dairy Student of the Year 2023*



*(Left) David Taylor receiving his award for Drystock Student of the Year 2023*

### Apply now for September 2024!

Applications for all our full-time level 5, and 6 courses are open now! You can apply via the Teagasc website directly, or through our own website.

However, if you haven't yet decided if we're the college for you then why not come along to our next open day on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March**, where we'll be giving guided tours of our campus, onsite accommodation, and our farm and equine facilities! Get in contact and book your place today- we can't wait to meet you!

Can't make it in March? Don't worry! We'll also be holding an Open Day on **May 10<sup>th</sup>**.

Call (067)21282

Email: [info@gurteencollege.ie](mailto:info@gurteencollege.ie)

Website: [www.gurteencollege.ie](http://www.gurteencollege.ie)





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### Agriculture Course Updates

We are almost halfway through the academic year. As we enter the Spring season, there is a definite sense of a change in the air. The birds are starting to sing a little louder, the days are getting a little longer and students on our full-time courses are beginning to see the end in sight. In the halls, you can hear the excitement building as they anticipate what work placement will be like. This change in pace can also be sensed by teachers who are anticipating the opportunity to catch up on tasks that were left aside while they put all their efforts into giving the students the best possible learning experience during the Autumn term.

-Stephanie Scully, Assistant Principal



*Gardaí talking to students about farm vehicle safety and property marking to deter theft.*

### Level 5 Agriculture:

The Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture course is progressing very well with all students now on placement. This placement will last 8 weeks and is an invaluable opportunity to put many of the skills learned and practiced into use in a different farm setting. Students must complete a weekly diary while on placement. The diary helps them identify the key performance indicators for the host farm, track their working weeks, and helps massively with the on-farm learning experience. Theory and skills assessments as well as assignment work have been ongoing since their return after Christmas. Students continue to be part of the farm work each week including lambing duty and milking duty. However, it's not all about academic work in Gurteen. Students have been busy playing sports like hurling and football and doing dancing lessons.

### Level 6 Agriculture

The full-time courses on offer at Level 6 are Dairy Herd Management and Drystock Herd Management. Both groups have all departed for a 16-week placement on a host farm sourced by our college placement officer. This longer period of placement allows the students to hone in on skills developed in the Autumn concerning overall management of a dairy or drystock herd.



*Level 5 students touring the Farmhand facility*





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*In January we harvested our willow, which will now be dried before it's use in heating up the college.*



*Lambing is well underway! In January we had 109 lambs from 75 ewes.*



*Our brand-new fleet of '24 plate tractors which were delivered in January*

### Farm Update

The early batch of ewes lambed in January and the midseason flock are just kicking off now. Alongside that, the dairy cows and sucklers are well through calving, and so the cows have been on/off grazing since mid-February. At the moment the livestock sheds are full of new life- and very busy!

It feels like it is going to be a late spring this year, we have managed to get some slurry spread on the drier fields in the occasional breaks from the rain and some fertiliser has recently been applied. I get the feeling once the weather does improve there will be no end to the work that needs to be completed though! Personally, I've used the poor weather as a chance to catch up on office work and to finalize our cropping plan and nutrient management plans. All we need now is some good weather to put all the planning into motion.

There was a week of frosty weather in January when we managed to harvest the willow in what I would consider near-perfect conditions for that particular job. I am hoping that by cutting the willow 2 months earlier than normal we will get stronger and more consistent regrowth. Our hire fleet of John Deere's supplied by TFM was changed at New Year, our one-year-old machines were taken out and replaced with 6 new tractors which included two 6120M tractors with loaders, one 6140M, one 6R140, one 6R155 and one 6195M. we're looking forward to some spring weather and putting these tractors to some serious work.

Farmhand visited us to do fertiliser spreader and sprayer training with students. They gave the students a great insight into the workings and operations of these machines, which nicely complemented the training our teachers had already given.

**-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager**





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### Words from Steven, our College Chaplain

My cars in the past have given me many happy memories - like contemplating the view of fields around me while waiting for a tow, or the joy of knowing that I was learning the depths of that quality called 'patience'. In one past car I had gearbox issues, not being able to move freely from one gear to the next and maybe having to skip one - or two.

Life can be like a set of gears. You need to start off in first and then work your way up. Depending on factors around you, you change gear at different times. And then there are times, to improve the journey, when you need to go back down a gear.

In Gurteen we understand this - and we know that everyone in our community is in different gears. Yes, many are at very similar stages of life, but there are so many different factors going on with our lives, that we need to be wise about what gear we are in. In general, we need to get somewhere, we need to 'move up the gears'. We need to put in the thought and the effort and be self-aware of our responsibilities - to our own selves and futures, but certainly also to each other and our wider society. However, I'm so thankful that we are a College that really appreciates the diversity and needs of each student and staff member - we're sensitive to the different gears that anyone may be in or need to be in. Let's journey well together.

-Steven Foster, College Chaplain.



*Our first-year degree students visiting Schoaboy bog as part of their Soil and Peatlands module they're completing.*



### Degree Course Updates

As semester two began, we welcomed 45 1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate Agricultural Science and Sustainability students to Gurteen, as this term they are based on our campus!

They are doing lots of practical skills in modules like Animal Production. They are also learning about soils and peatlands for the first time and the area of forestry and how it can complement a farm and have a real lasting impact on its sustainability are being studied.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are currently back on the TUS Thurles campus after their two semesters at Gurteen. They will still come to visit Gurteen for field trips and information-gathering trips. Each semester, there is one week where we break away from traditional lectures and adapt a problem-based learning (PBL) style of delivery. During this week, students are broken into groups where they are given a real-life problem being encountered on the farm. They are given the week to produce a short report outlining the possible solutions. All students are given access to any farm data, financial and otherwise to allow them to develop their solution.





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*Current view*



*New view, once the classroom block is built!*

### Expansion of the College "The centre for sustainable agriculture"

We're delighted to announce that we've finally been granted planning permission to develop a new teaching block, "the centre for sustainable agriculture". This dedicated classroom centre will be placed at the heart of campus strategically positioned between the farmyard to our main College building, highlighting the vital link between theory and practice.

The building will include 6 purpose-built classrooms with enough space to accommodate 200 students. It will ensure future students at Gurteen College are taught theory in classrooms that match the high quality of the practical teaching workshops and yard.



*Current view from the pool*



*Proposed new view from the pool!*





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Produced and Published by Molly Parry- Promotions and Social Media Officer



THURSDAY JULY 18TH 2024 - GURTEEN COLLEGE, CO. TIPPERARY.



ENERGYANDFARM DIVERSIFICATIONSHOW.COM

### Energy and Farm Diversification Show 2024!

We are delighted to announce that the Energy and Farm Diversification Show is returning **Thursday, July 18th 2024** to Gurteen College, for a day filled with innovation, inspiration, and invaluable insights into the future of farming and energy diversification.

What to Expect:

1. **Diversification Opportunities:** Explore new avenues in energy, leisure, hospitality, food and tourism industries.
2. **Renewable Energy Solutions:** Learn how to reduce energy consumption and increase renewable energy production on your farm and land.

Don't miss out on this must-see event for forward-thinking farmers and landowners! For more information

visit [www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com](http://www.energyandfarmdiversificationshow.com) to stay up to date on all the latest developments. See you there!

### Follow us on Social Media

Have you ever wanted to have more frequent updates of all we get up to here at Gurteen?

Make sure you're following us across all our social media platforms! We post frequent photos and stories of all the interesting things we've gotten up to recently! It's the best way to make sure you never miss anything.

We're **@GurteenCollege** on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter)



*RAMSAR hosted their meeting at Gurteen in January, where we showed them Lough Nahinch!*

*(Right) Students learning about working with slurry prior to starting their placements in February*

